

VENDORS PAY 50¢

PER PAPER

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Edmonton's No Cost Housing. Story pages 4-5. Photo by Linda Dumont

ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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THE VIEWS
PRESENTED ARE THOSE
OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

Thank you

By Angelique Branston

I just wanted to say thank you

To everyone who has supported me through the years, for making it possible that I could sell the news paper indoors to begin with and for the New people who are just starting to get to know me. To everybody - thank you. It means more to me than mere words can say. I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas (or wonderful holidays)

And of couse well wishes and a Happy New Year!

The walk

By Angelique Branston

Each and every day must be sought after diligently.

We must choose each and every day to love.

To put aside trivial things that cause strife.

Breathe

Take a step back

Let go of that which corrupts and drags us down.

It is easy to fall into despair

Every day millions of people dead or dying.

We are like the flowers

We are meant to bloom and mature.

Beautiful to behold.

Here one day and gone the next.

But these seconds of time that we have on this earth matter.

Everyday the lives

The people we come in contact with.

Matter.

We can choose to be a blessing and to show love as we each know how to show love.

Or we can seal our emotions within.

Giving and taking nothing.

A rock in the river of time.

I do not know what the future may hold, nor the next life.

Weather I live out my after life in heaven,

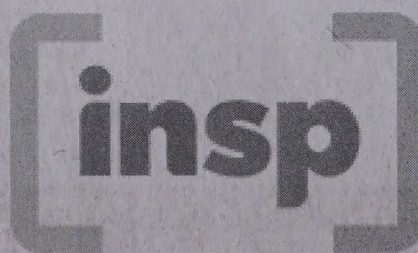
Or from there move on to the next planet.

The next time to continue to grow.

Only time may tell.

All I know is whatever the future holds

I must walk in love...



International
Network of
Street Papers

Before Before Dates

By Joanne Benger

On October 10th I attended a one house session with registered dietician Raina Baugelink at the W.E.E. Food bank in Entwistle. She explained the difference between expiration dates and best before dates using information from the Canadian Inspection Agency.

Expiration dates apply to meal replacements like Ensure, nutritional supplements, infant formulas and formulated liquid diets. These dates mean that the food will no longer be safe to consume or will have lost much of its nutritional value. Expired food items must not be used.

Best Before Dates are not regulated by the government. The manufacturer decides the Best Before Date and it is not illegal to sell food that has passed

its Best Before Date. Foods that have a shelf life of 90 days or less must have a Best Before Date. They usually show just the day and the month. The year is optional. It may say NO 30.

Foods that have a shelf life of more than 90 days do not need a Best Before Date. This means they can be consumed at any point if the package is unopened. For example, dry pasta will be safe to consume for years.

Best Before dates never guarantee a food to be safe. They indicate food quality not safety. If a food has passed its Best Before Date, it may have lost its crispness, freshness or taste and possibly some of its nutritional value but it is usually safe to eat it.

Some people still feel that Best Before Dates are pure consumerism. It's about making you spend more money.

They sell products as you move out dated food items out of your fridge and pantry.

The W.E. E. Food Bank does not put food that is past its Best Before Date into hampers. Clients often feel uncomfortable about having to come to the food bank and would feel even worse about themselves if they were given out dated food and dented cans.

Dented cans, food that is past its Best Before Date and snacks that have little nutritional value are not put into hampers. They are put on a help yourself shelf with a sign that says, "Oddities and Best Before Dates Passed. Use at your own risk." **People can help themselves to these foods to add to their food supply after they have received their hampers.**

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\$642 pays for publication of one issue.

Food Safety

By Joanne Benger

On October 24, I attended the three hour home study course in food safety taught by Donna Strongman at the W.E.E. Food Bank. Course material was provided by Alberta Food Services.

The main goal was to teach food handling practices that will reduce the risk of food borne illness or food poisoning. Children, pregnant women, seniors and people with weak immune systems are the most vulnerable.

According to 20017 Health Services statistics, the top five food handling mistakes that cause food borne illness are:

1. Ill food handlers. People with nausea and diarrhoea must not prepare or handle food for others.
2. Temperature abuse. Hot food must be kept hot (above 60 C) and cold food must be kept cold (below 4 C.).
3. Inadequate cooking. A meat thermometer should be used to make sure

cooked meat, poultry and fish have an internal temperature of 74 C or above.

4. Cross contamination. Raw food and ready to eat foods must be kept apart. Never use the same plates, knives or cutting boards for raw and cooked foods.

5. Improper cooling of cooked foods. Hot foods must be cooled quickly in shallow containers.

Cleanliness is important in preventing food borne illness. Hand washing is the best way to control the spread of disease. Hands should be washed at the beginning of the shift, whenever you come back into the kitchen, before preparing food, after touching raw meat, fish or poultry, after touching garbage or dirty utensils or equipment, after using the toilet, after changing a diaper, after eating, drinking or smoking, after blowing your nose or coughing or sneezing into your hand, after answering the phone and after touching money or anything others have touched. Hand

sanitizers don't replace hand washing and should only be used after hands are washed.

Everything used in food preparation must be washed, rinsed, sanitized and air dried. The cheapest sanitizer is bleach, a half teaspoon in a litre of water. It can be placed in a spray bottle but should be used the day it is prepared.

When cooking the idea is to destroy disease causing pathogens. Parasites are killed by freezing, but freezing just slows down the growth of bacteria and viruses. All three are killed by heat.

Produce that is eaten raw must be washed well.

At the end of the three hour course students took a written exam. Those who got 80% or more of the answers correct received a home Study Certificate that is valid for three years.

I went to report on the event and was pleasantly surprised to find I had earned a certificate!

Edmonton's no cost housing has a high cost

Story and photos by Linda Dumont

Edmonton's no cost housing is some of the most expensive housing in the city and the ten year plan to end homelessness in Edmonton is in its ninth year with no end in sight.

In Edmonton, the most northern large city in the world, homeless people suffer from cold related illness, frost bite, amputations from frozen fingers, toes, noses, etc., pneumonia, and other cold related problems. The cost of death is not in the reports, because death on the street is a much cheaper solution than maintaining life but there are people freezing to death on Edmonton streets every winter.

These deaths go unreported and are just spoken about on the street - "What happened to _____?" "He froze to death when his wheelchair got stuck in the snow." "June died during the night. She had pneumonia and they released her from the hospital that day. She just stopped breathing. It was 30 below We were sleeping outside" Her male friend said.

There are shelters, and warming centres during the coldest weather, but some people are barred out of

the shelters. I found a woman asleep in my backyard. I asked her why she didn't go to the women's shelter. She said she was barred out. What about Hope Mission Shelter? "I'm barred out there, too," she said. I know she is a difficult person to house, but how can shelters bar people out, especially in cold weather??

This fall there was a new five year plan put out by Homeward Trust and The City of Edmonton. Their report says a capital investment of \$230 million over six years is needed to house 4,000 homeless people and that a renewed commitment to tackling the problem could bring an end to chronic and episodic homelessness in Edmonton by 2022. In addition to more spending on housing, the report also calls for greater funding for operational funds and homeless interventions — an extra \$30 million per year on top of the \$35 million per year already being spent. The updated plan sets several targets, including that by 2020, "no one staying in shelter or sleeping rough will experience chronic homelessness," and that by 2022, everyone who needs help "will be connected to

housing and supports within 21 days."

Susan McGee, CE'O for Homeward Trust, said implementing the plan could save the city and the province about \$230 million over 10 years in reduced use of police, health care and emergency systems. The financial case for ending homelessness is strong, said McGee, "The cost, total, of supporting people appropriately as well as building those units is 75 per cent of what we would be spending otherwise," she said. "We've demonstrated that individuals who've been homeless a very long time can be very successful in their own housing."

An estimated one per cent of Edmontonians experienced homelessness during 2016. Many of them suffer from mental illness, and 48% identified as indigenous.

Overall, the cost of homelessness to Canadians was estimated at \$7 billion annually, according to the 2013 report *The State of Homelessness in Canada*. The estimate was based on the cost of reacting to homelessness instead of addressing the root causes of it and taking a proactive approach.

Canada's reactionary solutions

are expensive, typically involving a greater use of emergency services — law enforcement, courts and prisons, emergency healthcare, longer hospital stays, emergency shelters, etc.

Left: People band together in shelters made from tarps, shopping carts and whatever other materials they can find. This shelter is on the corner of 106 Avenue and 96th Street.



There are also longer term costs associated with chronic homelessness.

Those who spend longer periods on the street have a higher likelihood of suffering mental and physical health problems, addictions and disabilities.

Some useful comparisons provided in the report illustrate the higher costs that result from not taking affirmative action. For example, the average monthly cost of housing in facilities and institutions is as follows:

- Hospital bed: \$10,900
- Provincial jail: \$4,333
- Shelter bed: \$1,932
- Rent supplements: \$701
- Social Housing: \$199

The cost for 2017 would be somewhat more.

More recent research published in the summer of 2017 from the At Home Chez Soi (AHCS) project, which offers an accurate costing in Canada of those often termed "hard to house," say the average cost of homelessness ranged from just over \$29,000 in Moncton to a high of \$59,000 in Toronto (Vancouver fell in the middle at \$53,000, while Winnipeg and

Montreal sat at \$45,500 and \$53,000 respectively).

Not surprisingly, the biggest allocation in each city was the provision of health-related services, with 48 per cent of Vancouver's costs going toward health. Both Montreal and Toronto had just over 40 per cent directed to health services, including substance-use treatment, emergency room visits and psychiatric services. In a report by Richard Wilkinson, history professor at the university of London and author of *The Spirit Level*, at the International Network of Street Papers conference in Manchester last August, he spoke about the effect of poverty on health. The chronic stress of poverty causes a person to become ill more often and for longer periods of time.

The second largest cost of homelessness was related to legal issues, including incarceration, police interaction and court appearances. This translated into a high of 25 per cent in Toronto, or nearly \$15,000 per person. The other cities ranged from 15 per cent to closer to 20 per cent.

This is not surprising. A homeless

person living in Edmonton can rack up fines for many activities related to just living. An alcoholic can get a ticket for drinking in public. One man got a ticket for littering, when he urinated on the street. There are fines for riding the LRT without a ticket. All of these tickets go unpaid, resulting in a warrant, arrest, and then time spent in jail to pay off the fine.

A third key area was the cost of shelters and supported housing. Again, there was a range, with Montreal hitting close to 18 per cent while the other cities hovered between 10 per cent in Winnipeg to about 14 per cent in Toronto.

The variations among cities tell us that each has a unique set of factors that must be addressed with local solutions and plans. But the overall pattern of spending and need is clear: health, legal issues and shelters cost money.

Below: People sleeping outside on the vacant lot south of 106 Street between 96 Street and 97 Street.



Other December Celebrations

By Joanne Benger

I love Christmas. The Christmas season begins for different people on different days as decorations and outdoor lights go up and cards are sent to distant friends and relatives. But officially some say the Christmas season begins with the Advent. This year December 3 is the first Sunday in Advent as we begin to count the days to Christmas. The Christmas season traditionally ends on January 6, Epiphany. That is when many of us take down the tree and decorations. If any decorations are forgotten on that date we leave them up until Valentine's Day if we don't want to suffer from bad luck or so the superstitious say. For us, of course, the big day is Christmas Day December 25 which is followed by Boxing day.

Meanwhile other cultures have equally important December celebrations. The Jewish Festival of Light's Hanukkah or Chanukah is celebrated for eight days with delicious foods, family get together and the exchange of gifts. This year the first day of Hanukkah is December 13 and the

last day is December 21. The eight branched candelabra, the menorah, is featured. Each day at sundown a candle is lit with the Shamash or ninth candle until by the eighth day the whole menorah is alight. Children play with dreidel tops.

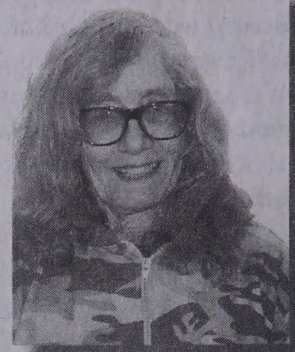
In Spain and Latin America the twelve days of Christmas end with Three Kings Day on January 6th, which is their big celebration because that is when the Magi presented their gifts to Jesus. On the eve of January 6th, the children put hay for the Magi's camels in shoe boxes under their beds. The next morning they wake to find gifts from the three kings have replaced the hay. The traditional meal is roast pork with rice pudding for dessert.

Kwanza, the old African harvest festival is celebrated December 26 to January 1st. The seven principles of kwanza are celebrated with seven candles, one black, three green and three red. One candle is lit each of the seven days and children are taught the principle it stands for: black for unity, red for self-determination, green for

collective work, red for co-operative economics, green for purpose, red for creativity and green for faith.

Japanese New Year is celebrated January 1st as is ours. New Year's Eve day, December 31, the house is cleaned to get rid of dirt and evil spirits. Four bamboo sticks are hung on the front door for growth and prosperity in the new year. At midnight, everyone gets new year's money and they eat soba noodles as they discuss new year's resolutions. Then, if they possibly can, people stay up until sunrise for luck. They eat a one-dish meal of vegetables, sea food and dessert for prosperity in the coming year and finally go to bed at noon.

Whatever your celebration and however you celebrate it, happy December to you.



Christmas cards

By Joanne Benger

I love old fashioned Christmas cards in the same old fashioned way I always have. I love buying them, sending them and getting them.

November first I bring out my Christmas card list and up date it. I remove people who have died or moved away with no forwarding address. I add new friends. Then I unearth my stack of cards. I don't just buy cards, I get seals and label them to decorate the envelopes. I don't just send a card with my name on it. I include a personal letter written on Christmas stationery and then I include something else - a recipe, book mark, photo or newspaper clip-

ping. Finally I go to the post office and buy the prettiest stamps I can find. I like to think my envelopes look gift wrapped and bring joy to postal workers, too.

When I get cards, I hang them on a string as my mother did, laundry style. I put enclosed pictures, letters, souvenirs and the like in a basket under the tree to mull over and enjoy.

I count my cards and tell everyone, "It's a six card Christmas.... Now, it's a 20 card Christmas," as the numbers grow each mail day. By Christmas day, I expect to have at least 30. Strays will keep coming until the end of January. One year a British card arrived in March. That was the latest ever.

I go to Boxing Day sales and make a head start on buying next year's cards, labels and seals and Christmas

stationary, while I am buying treasures on sale and spending my stocking money.

On January 6 I take down my tree and put away all the decorations for another year. The cards come down. I record the senders and make a note of changes of name, address or family status. Some cards came along with letters that must be answered right away. I mail a lot of get well and sympathy cards after I read of illness or death in the letters that accompanies my yearly Christmas cards. I send congratulations cards if there has been a birth, graduation or marriage.

I add names of those who sent me cards for the first time this year and then look at the list of those who usually sent cards but didn't this year. That is a troubling list. I only touch

Gifts From Christmas Grinches

By Joanne Benger

1. Home made food that looks dodgy. Why do people with a house full of shedding pets and sick children always give home cooking?
2. Regifts. Yes, regifts. If it looks familiar it is because I regifted it two years ago and yes, it was to a mutual friend. Some gifts are impressive and so useless that their only purpose is to be used for regifting.
3. The broken gift. It's carefully wrapped but all in pieces. The gift says, "Oh, I'm sorry, I dropped it but didn't realize." Of course the giver doesn't offer to replace it. It's yours and it's broken. Tough luck.
4. The incomplete gift. It looks good in the box and it isn't until you take the tree down that you actually look at it. Then you can't be sure. The giver may have bought it for the full price, unaware a previous shopper had cannibalized it. You don't want to upset the giver so you give it to the thrift shop where it will be sold to someone wanting a cheap gift that looks expensive and you get it again the next year.
5. The great buy. If the dollar store has anything with a manufacturer's recommended price at \$20, it will be off the shelf and end up as a gift for me. I may get six of them, and they are actually worth 50 cents each. The giver will absent-mindedly forget to remove their recommended price as they carefully steam off the dollar store sticker.
6. The cute puppy. If you have children beware the family gift of a cute puppy. The giver got it free because it will grow up to be six feet tall and eat a bag of dog food a day. By then the children will love it.
7. The mistake. It is absolutely perfect and you are delighted. And then the husband says, "I thought we were keeping it." And the wife mumbles a reply and he looks angry. Being polite and not wanting a scene, you return it to them, expecting you'll get something equally nice later on, but they never get you a replacement present.
8. The forgotten gift. They arrive with a flurry with extra mitts and scarves, sweaters and shawls, indoor shoes and slippers, water bottles, cell phones and tablets and the pets they couldn't leave behind. After they have settled in, she shrieks, "The presents, we forgot the presents!" they depart with all their baggage plus the presents you have given them and she promises to deliver the forgotten presents as soon as she can but you never see them.
9. The donation. After I have spent \$25 of hard earned cash on her gifts, she turns up with an envelope for me explaining, "We agreed to spend \$25 on presents so I gave \$25 in your name to ____" and names some charity that is not my favourite charity but hers. They as I look at the envelope, feeling stunned, she happily removes her gift from the gift bag, exclaiming, "Thank you. Just what I wanted." She has two gifts – the \$25 present I bought for her and the \$25 for her favourite charity. I have no gift. I simply lost \$25 and yet she is the one who looks virtuous for helping out that charity.
10. The expired gift card.



base with many people once a year. the cards I got carried the message "I'm okay." No card could carry the opposite message. It could also mean the card was lost in the mail or they trusted the wrong person to mail it.

I start asking mutual friends if they have gotten a card. Then if I am still puzzled, I write a friendly newsy letter without mentioning the missing card. Usually I get a reply but sometimes my card comes back after a

long delay stamped with "Moved" or "Deceased", and another name comes off next year's Christmas card list.

I keep my cards. I love to look them over and remember past Christmases, old times and old friends.

Emergency in buying two new front tires delayed saving for ASN jackets that I funded for writers and vendors

Story and photo by John Zapantis

"What goes up must come down". It's the popular adage derived from Murphy's Law. That was the unfortunate situation in the middle of September of this year, when that message and a nail to go with that scare was forcefully driven into my car's front right tire, while I was driving north-bound along 101 street past 106th avenue in Edmonton.

There was a loud repetitive rolling sound similar to that of the spinning wheel from the popular television game show Wheel of Fortune. That familiar warning sound was telling me that a two inch nail had been lodged right into my front right tire. What a strange prize to be dished my way - something I wouldn't consider as my Wheel of Fortune!

I realized that I'd have to call a tow truck to repair my tire before it became a flat tire. That nail lodged into my tire held off the air from coming out, giving me more than enough time to have the tire replaced. I quickly, pulled into a nearby Esso gas station on 101 street and 109th Avenue, where I asked the owner of the store if I could use his phone to call a tow truck to replace my damaged tire with the spare tire I had stored in the back of my car's trunk.

The tow truck driver from Kingsway Towing Group INC. arrived within

30 minutes of my call. My front right tire was replaced with my spare tire within five minutes from the time of the tow truck's arrival. After replacing the tire, the tow truck driver started to closely examine my two front tires and suggested that I have both replaced, because the treads on those tires were worn right down and could possibly endanger my safety while driving.

Then it dawned on me that I'd have to go into my savings. The savings consisted of \$500 dollars that I saved up as the Alberta Street News Media Relations Coordinator, so that I could buy 12 ASN jackets for our vendors and writers. After all, I had written a story published in the ASN September issue mentioning that as the Alberta Street News Media Relations Coordinator,

I was once again about to commend another 12 Alberta Street News vendors and writers for their contributions in writing about their personal issues and the vendors, who bring you the Alberta Street News on the street corners of Edmonton and Calgary.

Giving them free ASN jackets was my way of showing my appreciation for their efforts and commitment in making our paper the informative source it's been known to become while educating its ASN readers on what vendors personally experience, while writing about a range of diverse issues.

The issues could include stories related to poverty, mental and sexual abuse, alcohol and drug dependency, or anything that personally impacts living conditions.

When I took my car

in for inspection, the service attendant at the garage, confirmed that I needed two new front tires to replace the two worn down ones. Also, they discovered that my car needed a wheel alignment.

Now to add to the repairs, the estimate for repairs came out to \$178 dollars for each of the two tires. The wheel alignment alone would cost \$150 dollars. I told the garage to go ahead with the repairs. After the repairs were completed the bill came out to \$531. dollars.

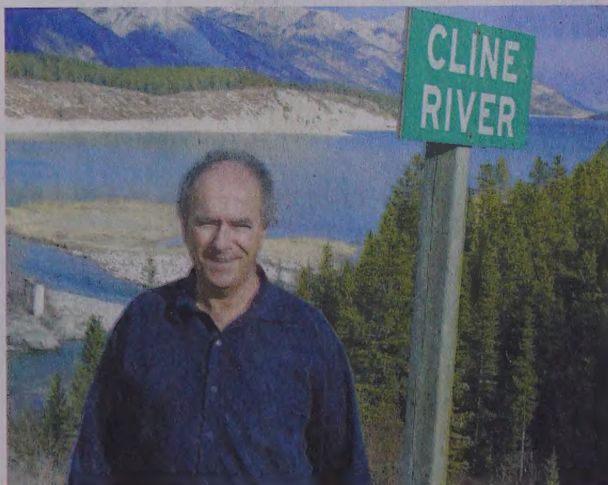
Well, spending the savings that should have gone towards buying 12 vendors' and writers' jackets, prolonged the process for me to have those jackets ready for everyone at the end of September like I mentioned in my article written in the September 2017 ASN issue.

So, I had to save up again and I'm happy to say that I finally reached my total savings. I had enough money saved up at \$655.20 cents for 12 ASN jackets that I had on contract for embroidery and stitching by Elite Sports Wear and Awards and finally had the jackets ready for pick up for distribution to our ASN writers and vendors. The new look Alberta Street News logos was created and designed by me.

Elite Sports Wear and Awards took on the responsibility of embroidery for the ASN logo that was placed on the heart area of these beautiful royal blue and black shirt jackets that are suitable for spring, summer and fall seasons.

The full names of our Alberta Street News, vendors and writers, along with their occupational titles, was another idea I came up with, when I decided that it would be appropriate to have

Continued on page 10



Right: Alberta Street News Media Relations Coordinator John Zapantis is seen here standing in front of the Klein River located in the heart of scenic David Thompson Country, Alberta. Photo by Matthew Johnston



Ambrose Place P.P.D.I.L.S. worker Jhor Sept and ASN writer/vendor Bill Cunningham were all smiles when Bill received his new look ASN jacket. Bill lives at Ambrose Place and has 24 - hour support staff on hand that provide his living unit all the amenities needed for quality of life.



ASN writer/vendor Harvey Laderoute wearing his new look Alberta Street News jacket accompanied by his ASN vendor Lorna Laderoute, who will be receiving a ASN jacket when the third series of jackets are ordered



ASN vendor Trevor Starr was impressed by the sight of his new look ASN jacket. He decided to hold up his prized gem for the cameraman, before fitting it on.



ASN Staff Writer Joanne Benger was pleased with her new look Alberta Street News jacket and felt honoured for being awarded the jacket for her contributions to our paper.

Tricks of the Flea Market

By Shyanne Austin-LeBlanc

I have been going to my local flea market for the past 20 years. During that time I have gained a lot of knowledge about the good and bad things one may encounter at the flea market. Flea markets are a place where the buyer must beware. Those who sell at flea markets have several tricks they may employ to move an object. I have seen sellers shrink wrap old teddy bears and toys to make them appear new and put cellophane and a large bow on gift baskets which contain old products. In some cases the products have expired and may be dangerous to use. You must be very careful that what you are buying is not broken or has not been broken and glued back together.

I recently bought a snow globe that encased Cinderella and her prince. I thought I had done a thorough job of making sure there were no broken pieces. However, when I looked at the snow globe at home I realized that it was supposed to play music and the music box handle had been broken off. Just last week my husband bought a pair of work boots which the vendor said were new and had never been worn. He wore them once and the entire sole of each boot separated and blew apart. It seems the vendor had glued the boots back together! Be careful when buying clothing or bedding as it may have been washed

in harsh chemicals that may cause an allergic reaction. I bought a lovely comforter set which caused me to get a rash. Always wash clothing and bedding before using it.

You may be able to score a really good deal on movies and cd's; however you must make sure the cd's are not scratched and the movies inside the package match the jacket. Beware of things which are battery operated, blow-up or light-up. Make sure the vendor lets you try the product out before you pay the cash. If you enjoy puzzles or games, make sure they are not missing pieces.

Some people may be selling baked goods but if you have any food allergies the flea market is not the place to eat. My mother once took an allergic reaction to a weird-tasting spice cookie purchased there. I once bought a pie from an elderly woman and took it to a family gathering. It seems she mistakenly put salt instead of sugar and the pie tasted like it was toxic.

Some vendors will try to trick you by presenting cheap knock-off articles as the real brand name product or try to pass gold-plated jewelry off as real gold. Look for identifying marks and labels that tell you if it's the real thing.

I have met three types of people who sell at this flea market. There are those who sell nice things at reasonable prices which is the reason I still go to the flea market. Then there are

those I call junk dealers who sell utterly useless junk that no one in their right mind would want. Yes, I have heard it said that one man's trash is another man's treasure but in this case the junk is so bad it belongs at the bottom of a landfill site. The third type of person has attractive wares at above store prices. Just last week I saw an attractive Christmas street lamp decoration being sold for one hundred dollars even though it was far from new. I have seen similar decorations being sold in the store for about fifty dollars. Even if I had bargained with the vendor, I never would have got the decoration for a reasonable price.

At the end of the day often these people have managed to sell nothing at all and they are out the rent for their tables. You would think that this would teach them something but come next Sunday they will be back.

When going to the flea market it is important to arrive when it opens if you want the best selection. If you are looking for deep discounts then right before the flea market closes is the time to go. Always remember that the items have been priced up because the seller knows that people will want to bargain for a lower price. If like myself, you are uncomfortable haggling a price simply ask "Is this your best price." If you notice that an item has a small flaw mention it to the vendor who will almost always give a discount. If you are careful and know the value of articles going to the flea market can be an enjoyable experience

Merry Christmas from Alberta Street News By Linda Dumont

I love the Christmas season. There is a spirit of generosity not seen for the remainder of the year. People remember those who are less fortunate, who might not be having a merry Christmas. The vendors report on gifts they receive – gift cards for stores and for Tim Hortons, gifts of cash, clothing and food. There is abundance not seen the remainder of the year.

December is the peak month for Alberta Street News sales, followed by a slow down in January and February. To ensure that the vendors have a paper to sell, I have gone ahead by faith, sending the December issue to the printer even though the paper has no money coming in this month except for a \$100 monthly donation that is in its final month. The December issue has to be paid for before the January issue can be sent to the printer. There is a short fall of \$542.

I had hoped that the City of Ed-

monton councillors would pick up their full page ad, but have not heard back from Councillor Micheal Walters since the civic election in October. He had arranged for a full page ad for six councillors from April to September 2017, which paid for the bulk of the printing bill each month.

Unless we can find a source of monthly revenue, Alberta Street News will become a bi-monthly paper in 2018.

House of Refuge Mission splits

By Linda Dumont

I've been a volunteer with the House of Refuge Mission since 2002 when the Inner City Mission closed, and a member of the board of the House of Refuge Mission since 2008, but as of Friday, November 17, I resigned from their board.

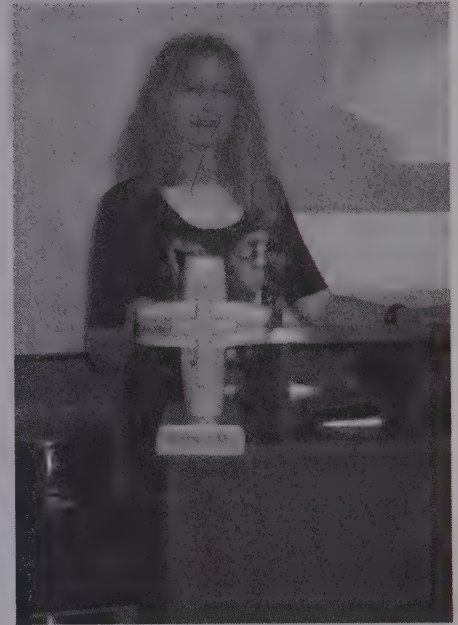
In April, a house was donated to the House of Refuge Mission by a Christian business man, who wanted to get the workers from the House of Refuge Mission off the street. They have been distributing food and clothing daily outside on the parking pad of Edmonton Cash Register since their building burned down five years ago. Since April the House of Refuge Mission was leasing the mission house at 10548-96 Street, which is

open as a drop in every evening from 5:30 until 9 p.m. with snacks served.

Some of us board members were working at the house, but the ones who were working on the street were opposed to the house. They formed a majority and on November 17, at an emergency board meeting, voted not to accept the gift of the house but to continue to work on the street corner. Those of us who were not in agreement with that decision resigned so we could continue to volunteer at the Refuge Mission House.

A newly formed charitable organization, The Refuge Mission Foundation, is now overseeing the operation of the house, and the work continues both on the street corner and at the drop in.

Warm winter clothing and blankets are needed. To make a donation, stop by the Refuge Mission House at 10548-96 Street, Rear Entrance,



between 5:30 and 9 p.m. daily or call Linda at 780-428-0805 to arrange another time to bring your donation.

Jackets

continued from page 8

titles underneath their names stitched on the right side opposite the heart side of these jackets. the right side opposite the heart side of these jackets.

After the jackets were completed by Elite Sports Wear and Awards I was given \$50. dollars off what would have been originally \$733.60 cents for 12 ASN jackets, because a jacket made for ASN vendor/writer Andie W.L. was flawed by the manufacturer the last time I ordered jackets, Elite Sports Wear and Awards was considerate in remaking another jacket so the total cost for the 12 jackets this time came out to \$655.20 cents.

These 12 ASN jackets where finally ordered by me on November 4th and were ready to be picked up for delivery on November 13th. Now I'm happy and proud to say that the following ASN vendors and writers have already received their free ASN jackets from me: ASN vendors and writers Trevor Starr, Dawna Romine, Bill Cunning-

ham, Allan Sheppard, Linda Dumont, who received a second jacket because the first jacket didn't fit as well, Joanne Bengner and Vivian Risby, who received a second jacket because the first jacket couldn't fit her properly. Andie W. L. also received a second jacket, because the first jacket had a flawed tag and because of its very small size for a big vendor that normally fits into a men's XXL size jacket. I also made a long distance phone call to our Calgary vendor/writer Andie W.L. and told her that because I forgot to include her occupational title under her name she'd be receiving another ASN jacket in the third series of ASN jackets that I intend on ordering for March of 2018. Thanks Andie for your patience and sorry for the blunder.

Additional vendors and writers who haven't contacted me yet to pick up ASN jackets that I have waiting to give to them include Clifford Mitchell Rob Champion, Maria B. and Belle St. Michel.

My heart goes out to this great team of vendors and writers along with our

ASN founder and editor Linda Dumont, who has encouraged all of us in contributing our helpful skills to this paper and the voice it has become, throughout its 14 years. Proud to say now that it's also our 14th Anniversary that commenced on November 16th 2017.

I'd also like to thank Elite Sports Wear and Awards for a job well done on our jackets. The staff behind that great production includes Elite Sports Wear President Drew Schamehorn, Sales Representative Kira Bellerose, and Promotional Marketing Consultant Chantelle Gaboury.

The sharp new look Alberta Street News logo in gold colors on the royal blue and black ASN jackets is a combination that could easily light up a Christmas tree. Just as strong of a light beams from the faces of the many vendors and writers that I've had the wonderful experience of giving these jackets to. It couldn't have come at a better time for Christmas!

The Truth of who are Are

By Maria B.

Our health and happiness is troubled when our basic needs are not met. The needs that matter to each person are unique to that person but at the same time we all share some basic universal needs. Our family, friends and physical and social environment all influence our basic needs.

We might come to the realization that as children our personal basic needs were never identified, we were just one of the children without realizing how different every child is and therefore our basic needs were never met. Because we were fed, dressed and kept relatively safe, these are the needs that our parents fulfilled. What about our emotional needs? Like love, acceptance, trust, a sense of personal autonomy, a sense of security, spiritual needs and one of utmost importance to me was the sense that I belong.

One thing that has taken me a life time to discover is the amazing power of our senses. Being aware of these amazing powers is completely unreal, when we have lived with all our wonderful senses but we have taken every one for granted.

When we are born we come into this world with the wonderful completion of who we are. Our formation has been masterfully done. We are born with eyes to see, ears to hear, sense of smell, sense of taste and the sense of touch but we can live using all our senses without realizing their purpose and their incredible power.

As parents it is our obligation to make our children realize their sensory capability and to become aware so they can use them fully. We may have gone through life seeing without looking, hearing without listening, tasting without enjoying what we eat and touching without realizing the beauty in front of us.

Have you realized that what we see and hear creates our thoughts? And

that if we are more aware of where our thoughts come from, we could have better conversations and we would be able to express ourselves in the truth of who we are?

Our external world is perceived through our senses. We may not have realized that we form our negative and our positive thinking especially about ourselves. If we allow the awareness of how we "think" and make sense of our experiences we would realize that what we see and hear is unique to each of us as a person and this is why our perception of things are also so unique.

Think of yourself as a child and all the negative talk about yourself that you received from your parents, You are stupid, you are ugly, you are clumsy, you will never be a success, you can not learn, you are dumb. All these labels come from the person that we are supposed to love and trust but we learn that in reality, they have contaminated who we truly are.

The above are labels serve to make the foundation of the person that we will think we are based on those labels. But in reality all those labels do not describe who we are; we have been masterfully created to become what we are supposed to become, we have all the potential to be a success in anything we decide to do but first we have to clear our selves from the labels and ensure that we do not allow anyone put a negative label on you again. These labels turn into beliefs about ourselves and become obstacles in our life.

I was told that I was ugly, stupid, and clumsy and I carried those labels



with me for years. I even learned to look in the mirror and see through the eyes of my parents and I hated myself so much that at a very early age I wanted to die.

I was reading a book about personal development and I wanted to know who I was, the real me as I have been living wearing masks of what people wanted me to be. And just finding out about our senses, how our thoughts are formed and how they become our beliefs, I realized that I have been living in a prison compounded by the beliefs of my parents.

It is never too late to see yourself as who you truly are. We are masterfully created by God. We are a gift to this world. And he wants us to use all our knowledge and develop our potentials helping other to see who they truly are.

We have a choice - we either continue living our lives with the labels that have been put on us or we peel them off and live our lives with the true knowledge of who we are.

Every person is a beautiful human being we have inherited the worth of a human being no questions asked. It is up to us to live the life that God wants us to live.

HEALING WORDS



BY THE CMHA
WRITING FOR RECOVERY GROUP

The Bullies on Edmonton Transit

By Gilly Ro

There they are
The bullies on Edmonton transit
Flapping their jaws in the air
Telling the world they don't care
Showing their bullying ware

There they are
The bullies on Edmonton transit
Teen to elderly age
The bus is their bullying stage
To express their cowardly rage

There they are
The bullies on Edmonton transit
Are their parents to blame?
For starting the bullying game
So they ended up being the same

There they are
The bullies on Edmonton transit
Who will have the courage to
change?
Courage doesn't have to be
strange
Where are the heroes on
Edmonton transit?

Christmas In Da Hood

By Sharon Spencer

The old man cried out in a gravelly voice, "Five minutes till closing," as he shuffled across the concrete floor with a broom. "Oh yeah and hope ya have a nice Christmas."

Reluctantly the crowd started towards the door. it was 9:15 on Christmas Eve on one of the coldest days in history.

Jimmy and Wesley were friends forever, even grew up in the same foster homes. You usually didn't see one without the other. Jimmy was the first to speak as he shuffled from foot to foot trying to keep the cold out of his wet dress shoes, "Man we gotta find a place to crash."

Just then they heard a booming voice from behind, "No room at the Hope - all filled up".

"That figures," said Wesley as he blew on his hands to warm them up.

"Hey Bro," Jimmy encouraged, "Don't let it bother you. We always find a place, don't we?" as he jostled him and pretended to throw snow.

Just then some others gathered around and a bottle of cheap wine was passed around while they tried to make light of the situation. After all, any moment on the streets could be your last. They all had lost a lot of bro's out there.

Pretty soon the crowd thinned out and soon Jimmy and Wesley were alone again.

Just up the street a family arrived home in there RV loaded down with presents, joyful and cheery as they laughed back and forth. Without hesitation they rushed into their lighted up house.

Jimmy cleared his throat and self consciously spoke, "Hey you want a take a boo." They peered casually into living room The tree glowed and everything seemed to be lit up Someone stirred the fire and it sprang to life.

"Just once don't you wish that was us ? No sense even thinking about it it's just a waste of time. Only make you sad." Wesley spoke chokingly. "Hey, lets get that cardboard over there and sleep under the vehicle. Its plenty warm - might just get us through." Soon they were under the car and trying to make light of the situation. The car radiated heat on that cold Christmas morning.

Jimmy mumbled, "Do ya think there's any truth in that Jesus stuff they're always saying."

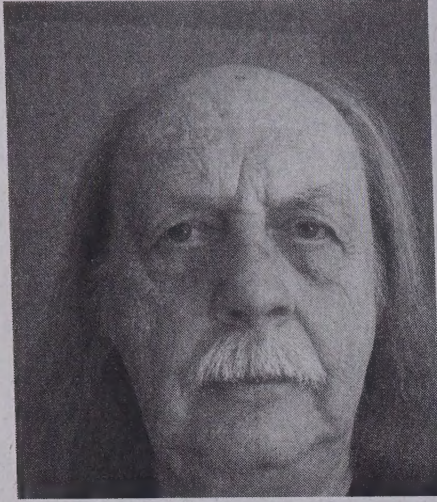
"Don't know Bro. Seen ya talking to that preacher lady. Yer not going soft on me are ya?"

"Naw. Yaw know I wouldn't do that. See ya in the morning."

They drifted off to sleep to the sound of laughter and carols coming from the house. But this night was going to be different from all other nights. This night the angels were passing over the hood. One spoke to the other. "There's one." They swooped down and gathered Jimmy in there arms carrying him off.

The preacher lady at the mission spoke sadly. "Now I know you're all sad cause Jimmy is gone and we shall miss him greatly but you all need to know this - Jimmy asked Jesus into his heart last night and last night he went home to be with Jesus. This is his first Christmas in heaven. He'll never be lonely cold or hungry again. You, too, can do the same."

Thoughts on humbuggery, its perpetrators, and its victim



By Allan Sheppard

To readers who will mark the approaching winter solstice by celebrating its religious resonances: Merry Christmas.

To those who like me to find more secular significance in knowing that we in the Northern Hemisphere will soon turn an astronomical corner and begin a long journey toward the warmth and light of summer (mindful still that we will, at the next solstice, start a return journey toward cold and darkness again): Season's Greetings/ Happy Holidays.

On behalf those who, like Charles Dickens's Ebenezer Scrooge, feel adamantly cynical about ideals of charity and charitable acts sometimes associated by religious and secular adherents with Yuletide celebrations: Bah! Humbug!

I had long assumed that the word humbug, as used by Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*, was a kind of generic epithet, dismissive and contemptuous but without specific meaning or significance beyond the unpleasantness embodied in its sound out of Scrooge's mouth—in the imagination and as portrayed by actors on screen through the years. A column by the Toronto Star's Rick Salutin (tinyurl.com/yabdzmn6)

prompted second thoughts.

The headline—A guaranteed basic income? Humbug!—and the thoughts explored beneath it challenged a line of thought I had been exploring in several of my own columns for ASN: that (forgive the cliché, but it seems apt in this case) a perfect storm of globalization, free trade, automation, robotization, and the burgeoning growth of artificial intelligence would generate a market in which work and the management of work would be taken over by machines and automated systems to the point that jobs would gradually be eliminated and might even disappear. Work would still need to be done: just not by people.

There would be few or no jobs, as such, and therefore few or no workers needed to do them.

People would become useless, except as consumers; but they could not fulfil that role without jobs and resulting income from wages.

A paradox: Without jobs, there would be no wages; without wages, there would be no consumption; without consumption, there would soon be no work and no use for the machines, robots, intelligence (artificial or otherwise), and trade agreements that might do and generate any work: the house of cards we know as free trade in a global market would collapse.

The logical and inevitable answer seemed to me a guaranteed basic income for all; sufficient to meet the basic needs of individuals and families in the absence of productive work and ability to find or do it; more importantly, sufficient to keep the economic pot boiling, generating revenue for the privileged and (in their view) indispensable few—the one per cent—to accrue for themselves and, however grudgingly, to share as much (or as little) as necessary to maintain the

system.

But hold on, my friend Salutin seemed to say. (Full disclosure: I have come to regard Rick as a friend after occasional correspondence and meetings flowing from a column he wrote in 2009 for the *Globe and Mail* about the death of my son Darcy Allan in a bizarre altercation with then former Ontario attorney general Michael Bryant on the glitzy "Mink Mile" section of Toronto's downtown Bloor Street West.)

Pondering thoughts in response to Salutin's invocation of Dickens eventually led me to explore possible meanings of Scrooge's epithet. A quick dictionary search proved fruitful: the on-line Oxford Dictionary defines humbug as "deceptive or false talk or behavior"; if applied to a person, it means "a hypocrite." In the same spirit, Merriam-Webster defines humbug as "an attitude or spirit of pretense and deception."

If Scrooge thinks of humbug as pretense and deception in relation to charity, he surely thinks it applies to recipients as the pretenders and deceivers, not givers. The indigent poor can always resort to workhouses and prisons to meet their basic needs; it is not the responsibility of their diligent and frugal betters to look after them and their families. Soft-headed sentiments of the season be damned. Salutin, surely, has different thoughts on who would be pretending and deceiving around notions of a basic living wage guaranteed by government and underwritten by corporate and better-off individual taxpayers.

Concentrating on job-killing trade deals as a driver behind the emerging concepts of a basic living wage to soften the impact of job losses on societies and economies, he accuses governments and others of a kind of hypocrisy, of keeping up appearances

Concentrating on job-killing trade deals as a driver behind the emerging concepts of a basic living wage to soften the impact of job losses on societies and economies, he accuses governments and others of a kind of hypocrisy, of keeping up appearances in the face of an impending disaster that they created but deviously blame on the victims: the unemployed, the underemployed, and the many who are but one paycheque or plant closure away from either situation or worse.

"The very governments and sectors that imposed and insisted on those debilitating trade deals," Salutin writes, "now rise up and say: Worry not, we will restore your declining security, which threatens to plunge you into need and onto welfare, with a guaranteed basic income.... (Y)our 'basics' will now, through our benevolence, be covered."

There's a word for that too, charity: "Charity is always a way to confirm who's on top and who's stuck below—and a guaranteed basic income is essentially charity."

If that is a fair analysis of things as they now stand for many Canadians (and others around the world), then Humbug! must surely be an appropriate, thoughtful response.

True believers in markets will insist otherwise, but the case is surely arguable and should, if we want better, be argued.

Salutin's point is not that the victims of things as they have come to be under free trade and market values should not have help to meet basic needs. He concedes he might support a basic living wage, "as a desperate stopgap measure. People have to survive."

But they should not have to surrender their dignity, their sense of personal integrity, in exchange for the means of survival. To do that, they would have to give up their "sense of agency and power" over their, their families', and their communities' destinies. That would amount to surrendering the vestige of agency and power that remains in the hands of insecure workers to those who have already co-opted too much: government, institutions, corporate and professional elites. We have gone too far in that direction already.

How to reverse the seemingly, deceptively, inevitable trend?

Salutin suggests "agency in some form. Take control of your destiny—both because it's more fun than the alternative and because you can't trust anyone else to. Organize somehow—unions, political parties, whatever—to get a seat at the same table as those guys with the investments and returns have done forever."

Above all keep "skulking around, conniving and contriving a way to contest power, not just gratefully accept its ambiguous droppings."

Amen to that.

Interesting times ahead, as in the ambiguous purported Chinese blessing/curse: May you live in interesting times.

Choose your next of kin

By Linda Dumont

For people who have lost contact with family, or who have been written off by their families, it is important to choose someone to be your next of kin in the event of your death.

I learned this when Joe Bates, a vendor and family friend, listed me as his next of kin at the hospital. As a cancer survivor, he was not a healthy man, and was frequently hospitalized. One day he told me, with a wry grin, that he had put me down as next of kin. I didn't think too much about that until about a year later when I got a call from the hospital to inform me of his death. As his next of kin, I was authorized to plan his funeral.

I told them to send his body to Connelly McKinley Funeral Home, then went there to choose a coffin and plan a funeral. The cost of the basic funeral and casket was covered by welfare, as well as the hearse and the plot at Holy Cross Cemetery. Sacred Heart Church and the funeral service were without charge. Flowers and cards were not covered but the funeral home was gracious enough to donate a beautiful casket wreath as well as the memorial cards. Joe had a very respectful funeral.

In contrast, when my late husband's Uncle Shakey passed away, he was cremated and disposed of as cheaply as possible with no funeral. His next of kin had written him off and couldn't care less as long as it didn't cost them money. We were not his next of kin, so the only thing I could do was to arrange a simple memorial at the funeral home for his friends and the workers who cared about him.

I have seen that happen with others, who have gravitated to the inner city. Family, if they have any, may not care but there are those who do care - friends from the street, and those who provide supports and services. But unless there is a designation as next of kin, or the family gives its OK, the person's body is simply dealt with as cheaply as possible with not so much as a memorial prayer..



Our vendors:

Maria D.

(Street Roots, Portland, Oregon, USA)

24 May 2017 - INSP News Service
By Alex Gillow-Wiles, Street Roots

Maria D. radiates human warmth and openness. Talking with her, it's hard to feel you're not right at home, regardless of where your conversation takes place. She speaks with a self-effacing kindness that belies the years of travel and hard work in her life.

Maria has lived in Portland for three years. She was born on the West Coast but spent many of her formative years in a much different climate.

"I grew up Southern California till I was 12 and after that, Minnesota. It was a big, huge culture shock," she says, laughing.

Maria is in a transitional period of her career. She's spent her life working in many industries – restaurant and service, cleaning, construction, caretaking, to name a few.

"I worked in a tool and die shop for a year. That was cool. Waitressing, hosting, dishwashing. I also worked with a tree trimmer for a year and lived in Apache Junction. Gosh, it was great. It was fun."

Today, Maria is reaching an age where her body no longer appreciates such physical jobs. She's trying to find work that doesn't exacerbate the kinds of medical conditions that a lifetime of labor can give a person.

"I'm trying to figure out if I can work, doing a different kind of job. I have fibromyalgia and a lot of problems, and it seems like I get really worn down when I put in a lot of effort do-



ing something. I know the physical's out, so this is my attempt at trying to work. I'm trying to find a job at two different places and see if I can handle working or not.

"I'm involved with the employment access center at Central City Concern. I need something where I can sit down or stand up, kind of fluctuate throughout the day. I really don't even know because I haven't done anything like this. I've always done physical jobs, so it's such a weird thing to think about. I believe in God, and I think that God has something planned for me. It will happen when it's supposed to."

Maria says she also wants to continue her education.

"I want to go back to college – I really do. I could be a counselor. I've been through everything with relationships and with drugs, all the aspects of homelessness – all that stuff. I think I would be able to understand someone.

"I would like to be a deaf interpreter. I have a deaf brother. I would really like to do that at schools. I know sign language, but I'm pretty

rusty. I know I'd enjoy that a lot.

"It gives you an independence that you don't get anywhere else."

Throughout the interview, it's a challenge to keep Maria focused on herself. She wants to talk about Street Roots.

"I want to say that the first time I came to Street Roots, I needed a bus pass to get to the hospital. I don't remember what was going on with me. I had only done the orientation, and it was my very first day, and I asked for a bus pass, and Cole didn't have one. And he took five bucks out of the register to give me so I could get to the hospital. That was my first memory of Street Roots. They have always welcomed me back regardless of how long it's been.

"You can come there and get a job right off the bat and start making a little money. So that gives you an independence that you don't get anywhere else," she says. "And there are a lot of people out there that love Street Roots. So it's always nice to find those people, just to connect with them. It's really cool."